

This action is responsive to the communication filed August 20, 2008.

Upon review of the application, the office action of July 23, 2008 is withdrawn in favor of the following. The error is regretted.

Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. 121:

- I. Claims 1-4, 31-33, and 35, drawn to a valve, classified in class 251, subclass 142.
- II. Claims 8-17 drawn to a valve, classified in class 251, subclass 142.
- III. Claims 21-26, 30, 34, and 36, drawn to a valve, classified in class 251, subclass 142.
- IV. Claims 37-49, drawn to two valves, classified in class 137, subclass 613.
- V. Claims 53-58, 62-82, and 112, drawn to two valves, classified in class 137, subclass 613.
- VI. Claims 83-88 and 92-111, drawn to two valves, classified in class 137, subclass 613.
- VII. Claims 113-118 and 122-129, drawn to two valves, classified in class 137, subclass 613.
- VIII. Claim 130, drawn to a method of operating a valve, classified in class 251, subclass 369.
- IX. Claims 131, drawn to a method of operating two valves, classified in class 137, subclass 1.
- X. Claims 5-7, drawn to an HPLC system, classified in class 73, subclass 61.43.

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- XI. Claims 18-20, drawn to an HPLC system, classified in class 73, subclass 61.43.
- XII. Claims 27-29, drawn to an HPLC system, classified in class 73, subclass 61.43.
- XIII. Claims 50-52, drawn to an HPLC system, classified in class 73, subclass 61.43.
- XIV. Claims 59-61, drawn to an HPLC system, classified in class 73, subclass 61.43.
- XV. Claims 89-91, drawn to an HPLC system, classified in class 73, subclass 61.43.
- XVI. Claims 119-121, drawn to an HPLC system, classified in class 73, subclass 61.43.
- XVII. Claims 132-134, drawn to a method of operating an HPLC system, classified in class 210, subclass 656.
- XVIII. Claims 135-137, drawn to a method of operating an HPLC system, classified in class 210, subclass 656.

The inventions are independent or distinct, each from the other because:

Inventions I-VII are directed to related inventions. The related inventions are distinct if: (1) the inventions as claimed are either not capable of use together or can have a materially different design, mode of operation, function, or effect; (2) the inventions do not overlap in scope, i.e., are mutually exclusive; and (3) the inventions as claimed are not obvious variants. See MPEP § 806.05(j). In the instant case, the

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inventions as claimed are not capable of use together and can have a materially different design, mode of operation or effect. Furthermore, the inventions as claimed do not encompass overlapping subject matter and there is nothing of record to show them to be obvious variants.

Inventions X-XVI are directed to related inventions. The related inventions are distinct if: (1) the inventions as claimed are either not capable of use together or can have a materially different design, mode of operation, function, or effect; (2) the inventions do not overlap in scope, i.e., are mutually exclusive; and (3) the inventions as claimed are not obvious variants. See MPEP § 806.05(j). In the instant case, the inventions as claimed they are not capable use together and can have a materially different function or effect. Furthermore, the inventions as claimed do not encompass overlapping subject matter and there is nothing of record to show them to be obvious variants.

Inventions I-III and VIII are related as product and process of use. The inventions can be shown to be distinct if either or both of the following can be shown: (1) the process for using the product as claimed can be practiced with another materially different product or (2) the product as claimed can be used in a materially different process of using that product. See MPEP § 806.05(h). In the instant case the product as claimed can be used in a materially different process such as opening all fluid lines.

Inventions IV-VII and IX are related as product and process of use. The inventions can be shown to be distinct if either or both of the following can be shown: (1) the process for using the product as claimed can be practiced with another materially

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different product or (2) the product as claimed can be used in a materially different process of using that product. See MPEP § 806.05(h). In the instant case the product as claimed can be used in a materially different process such as opening all fluid lines.

Inventions XVII and XVIII are directed to related inventions. The related inventions are distinct if: (1) the inventions as claimed are either not capable of use together or can have a materially different design, mode of operation, function, or effect; (2) the inventions do not overlap in scope, i.e., are mutually exclusive; and (3) the inventions as claimed are not obvious variants. See MPEP § 806.05(j). In the instant case, the inventions as claimed they are not capable use together and can have a materially different function or effect. Furthermore, the inventions as claimed do not encompass overlapping subject matter and there is nothing of record to show them to be obvious variants.

Restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper because all these inventions listed in this action are independent or distinct for the reasons given above and there would be a serious search and examination burden if restriction were not required because one or more of the following reasons apply:

- (a) the inventions have acquired a separate status in the art in view of their different classification;
- (b) the inventions have acquired a separate status in the art due to their recognized divergent subject matter;

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- (c) the inventions require a different field of search (for example, searching different classes/subclasses or electronic resources, or employing different search queries);
- (d) the prior art applicable to one invention would not likely be applicable to another invention;
- (e) the inventions are likely to raise different non-prior art issues under 35 U.S.C. 101 and/or 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph.

Applicant is advised that the reply to this requirement to be complete must include (i) an election of a invention to be examined even though the requirement may be traversed (37 CFR 1.143) and (ii) identification of the claims encompassing the elected invention.

The election of an invention may be made with or without traverse. To reserve a right to petition, the election must be made with traverse. If the reply does not distinctly and specifically point out supposed errors in the restriction requirement, the election shall be treated as an election without traverse. Traversal must be presented at the time of election in order to be considered timely. Failure to timely traverse the requirement will result in the loss of right to petition under 37 CFR 1.144. If claims are added after the election, applicant must indicate which of these claims are readable on the elected invention.

If claims are added after the election, applicant must indicate which of these claims are readable upon the elected invention.

Should applicant traverse on the ground that the inventions are not patentably distinct, applicant should submit evidence or identify such evidence now of record showing the inventions to be obvious variants or clearly admit on the record that this is the case. In either instance, if the examiner finds one of the inventions unpatentable over the prior art, the evidence or admission may be used in a rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) of the other invention.

This application contains claims directed to the following patentably distinct species:

Figures 1A-3D (the absence of a brief description of 3D is noted)

Figure 4A-4B

The species are independent or distinct because claims to the different species recite the mutually exclusive characteristics of such species. In addition, these species are not obvious variants of each other based on the current record.

Applicant is required under 35 U.S.C. 121 to elect a single disclosed species for prosecution on the merits to which the claims shall be restricted if no generic claim is finally held to be allowable. Currently, none of the claims appear to be generic.

There is an examination and search burden for these patentably distinct species due to their mutually exclusive characteristics. The species require a different field of search (e.g., searching different classes/subclasses or electronic resources, or employing different search queries); and/or the prior art applicable to one species would not likely be applicable to another species; and/or the species are likely to raise different non-prior art issues under 35 U.S.C. 101 and/or 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph.

Applicant is advised that the reply to this requirement to be complete must include (i) an election of a species to be examined even though the requirement may be traversed (37 CFR 1.143) **and (ii) identification of the claims encompassing the elected species**, including any claims subsequently added. An argument that a claim is allowable or that all claims are generic is considered nonresponsive unless accompanied by an election.

The election of the species may be made with or without traverse. To preserve a right to petition, the election must be made with traverse. If the reply does not distinctly and specifically point out supposed errors in the election of species requirement, the election shall be treated as an election without traverse. Traversal must be presented at the time of election in order to be considered timely. Failure to timely traverse the requirement will result in the loss of right to petition under 37 CFR 1.144. If claims are added after the election, applicant must indicate which of these claims are readable on the elected species.

Should applicant traverse on the ground that the species are not patentably distinct, applicant should submit evidence or identify such evidence now of record showing the species to be obvious variants or clearly admit on the record that this is the case. In either instance, if the examiner finds one of the species unpatentable over the prior art, the evidence or admission may be used in a rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) of the other species.

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Upon the allowance of a generic claim, applicant will be entitled to consideration of claims to additional species which depend from or otherwise require all the limitations of an allowable generic claim as provided by 37 CFR 1.141.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to John Fox whose telephone number is 571-272-4912. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Saturday from 10am-6pm (Hoteling Program).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Gregory Huson can be reached on 571-272-4887. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/John Fox/
Primary Examiner
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